

Co-chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Currey, Ranking Members Representative McCarty and Representative Berthel, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Laura Burfoot and I am a resident of New London, Connecticut. **I am testifying in support of S.B. 1095: An Act Concerning School Resource Officers.**

I have a 21 year old daughter. She attended 2 high schools; Ledyard High School for her freshman year and half of her sophomore year, and then New London High School. Ledyard High School did not have a school resource officer. New London High School did.

Every time I drove my daughter to New London High School in the morning, or dropped her off after an appointment, or picked her up, there was a police car sitting right outside the building, right outside the front doors. I ask you, what message does this send to our students, our children? My daughter is smart, she's a critical thinker. She started to ask questions— why does one school have a police officer stationed there, and one doesn't? We talked it through. We looked at population size; that seemed like the only logical reason for one school to have an SRO and the other not to. It wasn't that— both schools have a similar population size.

I'm here to say that it felt terrible to bring my 15 year old child to school and see a police car stationed out front every day. Instead of sending the message that- this school is a place of learning, there are scholars here, whom we respect, uplift, and cherish; it sends the message that there are criminals here, who need to be policed, monitored, and controlled.

I hated it every single time. I didn't want that for my daughter, and I don't want it for anyone's children.

You have already heard the statistics— Black children are more likely to be arrested in schools that have school resource officers. You have already heard the other statistics— that having police in schools does not actually protect against school shooters, sadly.

This bill is about opening the discussion of — what role do police have in schools? Do police belong in schools? Many people who work in schools, and many students too, will argue that their school resource officer is in fact that— *a resource*. I've seen that— in our district, we had now State Rep Anthony Nolan as a school resource officer, and he was excellent. I've worked with hundreds of young people in New London over the past 18 years, and many really loved him. Felt understood by him. Could talk to him. I am FOR all of those things— we NEED adults in school buildings with whom students can open up, connect, and be heard. But those adults don't have to be armed police officers. They can be counselors, mental health professionals, restorative justice practitioners.

Let's direct our resources to having more adults in the building who support young people, and don't have the power to arrest them for non-violent offenses. ***I strongly urge you to support the passage of SB1095.***

Thank you,
Laura Burfoot

